

There are only two religions: (1) the Truth of the Almighty, as expressed in His Word, the Bible; and (2) every other belief. These two religions cannot be mixed, without disastrous results. Babylon is the source of false religion, Revelation 17:1-6. When John wrote the Revelation, Babylon, as a city, had already been destroyed and left in ruins, as Old Testament prophets had foretold, Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 51-52. Though the city of Babylon was destroyed, its religious concepts and customs had spread around the world. Today's myriad of false religions have their origin in ancient Babylon.

Ralph Woodrow, in his book, *Babylon Mystery Religion* (first published in 1966, now out of print), clearly traces the practices and teachings of ancient Babylon, and their modern counterparts in the Roman Catholic Church and her Protestant daughters. Babylonian ideas are by no means isolated to professing Christianity. Since nominal Christianity is so permeated with false doctrines from Babylon, we should carefully study this problem, so as to avoid Babylonianism. Today, there is an almost irresistible tide in the Church of God to turn aside to ideas of Babylon. All too many believers are taking one of the many roads to Rome and Babylon. Here is a summary of Woodrow's excellent book, *Babylon Mystery Religion*.

Nimrod and Semiramis

Legends are difficult to prove; they are almost impossible to disprove. Nimrod, the mighty hunter before (against) the Lord, was the first to organize cities into a kingdom under human rule, Genesis 10:8-10. This much we know from the Bible. The name Nimrod comes from the word, marad, meaning "he rebelled." Legend has it that Nimrod married his own mother, Semiramis. After Nimrod died, Semi-ramis claimed Nimrod was the sun-god. She later had a child, Tammuz, whom she claimed was Nimrod reborn, supernaturally conceived, the promised seed, the "savior." Semiramis developed a religion of mother and child worship. Symbols were used to develop a "mystery" religion. Since Nimrod was believed to be the sun-god (Baal), fire was considered his earthly representation. In other forms, Nimrod was symbolized by sun images, fish, trees, pillars, and animals. Tammuz, son of the sun-god, was represented by the golden calf. And so it was, that mankind followed this religion of worshipping the creation (creature) rather than the Creator, Romans 1:21-26.

Whether or not the Nimrod-Semiramis-Tammuz legends are completely historical or not is immaterial. The result of these legends is that mankind in general, has followed variations of one kind or another, of the religion of Babylon, to this day.

Rome, the greatest and longest-lived human world-ruling empire, assimilated religions from her many conquered territories. All these religions had commonalities, for they all came from Babylon. These practices infiltrated and overcame the professing Christian Church, which later came to be dominated by Rome itself.

Mother and Child Worship; Mary Worship

Pictures are worth a thousand words. If you doubt the common origin of many pagan practices, pictures showing the striking similarity should convince you. Many pagan religions had mother and child worship, whether Devaki and Crishna (India), Isis and Horus (Egypt), Venus or Fortuna and Jupiter (Rome), etc. Each nation gave different names to essentially the same god or goddess.

A mother goddess, or "queen of heaven," was said to have given miraculous birth to a son. Ancient Israel sometimes followed this false religion, Judges 2:13, 10:6; I Samuel 7:3-4, 12:10; I Kings 11:5; II Kings 23:13; Jeremiah 44:17-19, with disastrous results. In Ephesus, Semiramis was worshipped as the great mother Diana, the many-breasted goddess. This form of mother-child worship was followed throughout all Asia and the world, Acts 19:27.

Mary worship had no place in the early Christian Church. Even the Catholic Encyclo-pedia (article, "Virgin Mary," pp. 459-460) admits that in the first centuries, A.D., there are no traces of the worship of Mary. By the fourth century, the time of Emperor Con-stantine, wor-ship-ping Mary as a goddess and offering cakes at her shrine, began to come into the professing Church. In A.D. 431, the Council of Ephesus made Mary worship official. By mixing beliefs already being practiced (Diana of Ephesus worshipped as a goddess) with nominal Christianity, so-called Church "fathers" reasoned that they could gain more converts. It is the same old story. Apostates believe that lowering God's standards results in a better form of religion, more acceptable and popular to the masses.

The Bible is clear that there is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ, I Timothy 2:5. Yet Roman Catholicism teaches that Mary is also a "mediator." Catholics offer prayers to Mary, burn candles to Mary, and have statues of Mary, which came directly from their pagan counterparts. Isis, the Egyptian goddess, was known as "mother of God," just as Mary is titled by Catholics. Weigall, in *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, page 129, says, "When Christianity triumphed, these paintings and figures became those of the madonna and child, without any break in continuity: no archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some of these objects represent the one or the other."

In pagan religion, the mother was worshipped as much (or more) than her son! Noted Roman Catholic writer Alphonsus Liguori stressed that prayers addressed to Mary are much more effectual than to Christ. Mary is deified as the "queen of heaven," born without sin (Immaculate Conception), the

“mother of God,” exactly as pagan worshippers deified Isis, Venus, Ashtoreth, etc. Jesus did not teach that Mary was superior to other human beings. When someone mentioned His mother and brethren, Jesus asked, “Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?” Then, stretching forth His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brethren! For WHOSOEVER shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and MOTHER,” Matthew 12:46-50. Anyone who does the will of God is on the same level as Mary.

Closely associated with praying to Mary is the rosary, a chain of fifteen sets of small beads, marked off by one large bead. The ends of the chain are joined by a medal with an imprint of Mary, from which hangs a short chain with a crucifix at the end. The use of prayer-counters or rosary beads is an almost universal custom in pagan religion. From Nineveh to India to China, beads were used as a part of worship. The Phoenicians used a circle of beads resembling a rosary in the worship of Astarte, the mother goddess, as early as 800 B.C. Francis Xavier was astonished to see that rosaries were universally familiar to the Buddhists of Japan.

The main prayer of the rosary is the “Hail Mary.” The complete rosary repeats the Hail Mary 53 times, the Lord’s Prayer 6 times, and several other recitations. The Hail Mary combines the statement of the angel about Mary from the Bible with unscriptural blasphemy, “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women Jesus [a loose translation of Luke 1:28], and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death, Amen.” Mary was not the mother of God, she was not holy, she was a righteous woman who is dead in her

grave, waiting for the resurrection to eternal life, with all the other dead in Christ.

The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "There is little or no trace of the Hail Mary as an accepted devotional formula before about 1050," article "Hail Mary," p. 111. Jesus instructs us not to use vain repetitions when we pray, Matthew 6:7-8. The so-called "Lord's Prayer" verses 9-13, was a model prayer, not a prayer to be monotonously repeated. Jesus said in effect "pray thus" (after this manner therefore pray ye), not "pray this." Prayer should be spontaneous, not rote memory with no heart-felt meaning.

Many Gods, Statues, Pictures

There is only one God family, composed of the Father and the Son. We have direct access to God through the blood of Jesus Christ, Hebrews 4:14-16, 9:12, 10:10. Roman Catholics honor and pray to various special "saints," canonized by the church hierarchy. According to the Bible, ALL true Christians are saints (Ephesians 1:1, etc.). If we want a saint to pray for us, it must be a living person. If we try to commune with people that have died, this is a form of spiritism. The so-called "Apostles' Creed" says, "I believe . . . in the communion of the saints," supposing that prayers are effectual, to and for the dead. Babylonian religion had a plurality of gods, some 5,000 gods and

goddesses, once heroes on the earth, but now elevated on a higher spiritual plane. Every month and every day of the month was under the protection of a particular divinity. In exactly the same way, Roman Catholics have "saints" for almost every day of the year, for occupations, for specific problems. St. Clare is the saint for television, St. Denis for headaches, St. Hadrian for butchers, etc.

Now, why pray to dead saints when Christ-ians have access directly to God? Catholics are taught that they should pray to Mary and other dead saints to obtain help that God would not otherwise give! In other words, God cannot be depended upon or trusted; we should pray to Him through Mary and the saints, who supposedly are more kind and loving than God Himself. In church buildings of Europe today, it is not uncommon to have two, three, or four thousand statues. Those who bow and worship before statues know fully well that the statue is not "god," but only representative of god. Catholics, like pagans, know that the statues they worship are not god. However, this excuse does not get around Exodus 20:4-5, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is underneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them."

The Bible instructed the ancient Israelites not to adopt the idols of pagans into the true worship of Yahweh. "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to the Lord," Deuteronomy 7:25. Israelites were to "destroy all their pictures," Numbers 33:52.

Pagans placed a circle or aureole (disk of the sun-god) around the heads of those who were "gods" in their pictures. This practice continued right into the Romish church.

For the first four centuries, the church used no pictures of Christ. Since Christ is now glorified on the right hand of the Father, no picture could come close to doing Him justice! We do not need, nor should we have, statues, pictures, or representations of God and Christ.

Obelisks, Temples, and Towers

The Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., is modeled after an Egyptian obelisk. According to Diodorus, Queen Semiramis in Babylon erected a 130-foot tall obelisk. The obelisk was popular in Egypt, associated with sun-worship. The erect upright pointed column represents the phallus, the male sex organ, of Baal (Nimrod). Here we see a common theme of Babylonian worship: emphasis on perverted sexuality. The Bible mentions such "standing images," matzebah, I Kings 14:23; II Kings 18:4, 23:14; Jeremiah 43:13; Micah 5:13, and "sun images," hammanim, Isaiah 17:8, 27:9. God will not forever allow these standing images to remain, but will cast them down.

The "image of jealousy" erected in the entry to the Temple, was probably an obelisk, symbol of the phallus, Ezekiel 8:5. It was common to place an obelisk at the entrance of a heathen temple. And so it is, that at the entrance to St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican in Rome, there is an Egyptian obelisk. This is not a copy of an Egyptian obelisk, as is the Washington Monu-ment. It is the same obelisk that stood in Egypt in ancient times at the pagan temple of Heliopolis (city of the sun-god). Emperor Calig-ula, in 37-41 A.D., hauled it from Egypt to Rome at great expense, to his circus on Vatican Hill. Helio-polis is the Greek name of the Heb-rew Beth-shemesh (house of the sun), which was the center of ancient Egyptian sun-worship. Obelisks that stood there are called "images of Beth-shemesh," Jeremiah 43:13. In 1586, Pope Sixtus V had the 83-foot high 320-ton obelisk moved to the center front of St. Peter's square, where it resides today, symbolic of the merger of Egyptian sun-worship with professing Christian-ity.

God's people do not have an edifice complex. Those who have the Holy Spirit are the temple of God, I Corinthians 3:16. There is no record of a church building (as such) being built prior to A.D. 222-235. It is not wrong to have Church buildings, but false believers embellished their halls of worship with pagan spires similar to pagodas and shrines of idolatrous worshippers. "There is evidence to show that the spires of our churches owe their existence to the uprights or obelisks outside the temples of former ages," Brown, Sex Worship and Symbolism of Primitive Races, p. 38. "There are still in existence today remarkable specimens of original phallic symbols . . . steeples on the churches . . . and obelisks . . . all show the influence of our phallus-worshipping ancestors," Eichler, The Customs of Mankind, p. 55.

Cross Not a Christian Symbol

One of the most important symbols of Catholics and Protestants is the cross. The priest makes the sign of the cross on the head of infants as they are sprinkled; churches are built in the shape of the cross; when Catholics enter church, they take "holy water" and make the sign of the cross; during Mass, the priest makes the sign of the cross 16 times and blesses the altar with the cross 30 times. The cross is universally worn as jewelry around the neck, and is prominent in professing Christian homes.

Early Christians considered the cross as "the accursed tree," a device of death and "shame," Hebrews 12:2. They did not trust in an old rugged cross. Instead, their faith was in what was accomplished on the cross (or stake, or whatever it was Jesus was impaled upon). That is how the Apostles preached about the cross, I Corinthians 1:17-18.

It was not until Christianity became paganized (or paganism was Christianized), when the cross image came to be thought of as a Christian symbol, part of worship. Crosses in churches was introduced in A.D. 431; the use of crosses on steeples did not come about until about 586. The Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says the cross originated among the Babylonians of ancient Chaldea, used as a symbol of the god

Tammuz. Almost any book of ancient Egypt shows the use of the Tau cross (shaped like the letter "T") on old monuments and walls of ancient temples. Seymour says that the cross, unchanged for thousands of years, "was revered . . . among the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Mexicans, and every ancient people of both hemispheres," *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, pp. 22, 26. The cross had been a sacred symbol of India for centuries among non-Christians. Prescott reports that when the Spaniards first landed in Mexico, they were shocked to behold the cross, sacred emblem of their own Catholic faith, revered in Aztec temples. A heathen temple in Palen-que, Mexico, founded in the ninth century B.C., was known as "The Temple of the Cross." Ancient Mexicans worshipped a cross as *tota* (our father), similar to apostate Israelites who worshipped a piece of wood as "my father," Jeremiah 2:27. In 46 B.C., Roman coins show Jupiter holding a long sceptre terminating in a cross. Vestal virgins (temple prostitutes) of pagan Rome wore the cross suspended from their necklaces, as Roman Catholic nuns do today.

"Since Jesus died on a cross," some say, "doesn't that make it a Christian symbol?" Let us suppose He was put to death with a hatchet; would this be a reason to venerate the hatchet? Again, the important thing is not the way Jesus died, but who died (the son of God), and why He died (for the sins of mankind). Crucifixion was a common method of execution for flagrant crimes in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Palestine, Carthage, Greece, and Rome. Seymour reports, "Tradition ascribes the invention of the punishment of the cross to a woman, the queen Semiramis," (*Ibid.*, p. 64).

Relics of Romanism

Pagans regarded the cross as a protector. Ancient Italians placed a cross upon the tombs. In like manner, uneducated professing Christians today use the cross in their homes to ward off trouble and disease. In ancient Israel, a plague of serpents afflicted the Israelites. Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, and if anyone who was bitten by a serpent looked upon the brasen serpent, they lived, Numbers 21:9. Lifting up the serpent in the wilderness was a type of the way Christ would be lifted up on the stake, John 3:14. After the brasen serpent had served its purpose, the Israelites kept it around and made an idol out of it. Centuries later, Hezekiah broke in pieces the brasen serpent, because Israel was burning incense to it, II Kings 18:1-4. Even items which God used for His purpose, if looked at for themselves and not for the God who used them, can become objects of idolatry. The cross has served its purpose. Jesus rose from the dead. Let us not worship the cross and other relics.

Among the most venerated objects of worship are supposed "relics," or pieces, of the cross upon which Jesus was crucified. If all the pieces were gathered together, they would fill a good-sized ship. Catholics believe that the house in which Mary lived in Nazareth is now in the little town of Loreto, Italy, having been transported there by angels. The "holy house" of Loreto is one of the most famous shrines of Italy, honored by more than 47 popes. Veneration of the dead bodies of martyrs was ordered by the Council of Trent, which condemned those who did not believe in relics. Bones are placed beneath a church, in

the belief that saints' bones "consecrate" the ground and building. The Castle Church at Wittenberg, the door of which Luther nailed his "Ninety-five Theses," had 19,000 relics of dead "saints." The second Nicean Council in 787 decreed it illegal to dedicate a building if no relics were present, on penalty of excommunication.

Adoring the bones of the dead is a direct carry-over from paganism. In legend, when Nimrod, the false "savior" of Babylon, died, his body was torn limb from limb, and buried in various places. His "resurrection" to a new body, becoming the sun-god, left behind his old body. This contrasts with the death of the True Savior, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, "a bone of Him shall not be broken," John 19:36; who was resurrected in the true sense of the word, leaving behind no body parts for relics. In the old mystery religion, bones of hero-gods consecrated shrines, and relics were worshipped. In God's wisdom, however, He secretly buried Moses to ensure nobody would venerate His servant Moses, Deuteronomy 34:5-6.

So, why should we venerate bones and relics (articles of clothing, etc.) of the saints? The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "no dishonor is done to God by the continuance of an error which has been handed down for many centuries Hence there is justification for the practice of the Holy See in allowing the cult of certain doubtful relics to continue," article "Relics," p. 738.

Don't believe the religious fakery of relic worship, of those who claim to have a bone of Joseph, some of the hair of Mary, the shroud of Turin, or what have you. Worship God the Creator. The monks of Charroux (as well as three other churches in

France, Rome, and Italy) claim to have the foreskin of the baby Jesus. May the Eternal guide us to His True worship, in Spirit and Truth, not religious lies and shady salesmanship.

Pay for Forgiveness of Sins or Suffer?

Do you believe that Christ paid the penalty for ALL your sins? I do! Yet, Catholics believe that sins committed after (infant) baptism can be forgiven, "but there still remains the temporal punishment required by Divine justice, and this requirement must be fulfilled either in the present life or in the world to come [i.e., Purgatory]. An indulgence offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt during this life on earth," Catholic Encyclopedia, article "Indulgences," p. 783. The basis for indulgences (still a belief of Catholics) is the "Treasury" of merits of Christ and the saints.

However, since Christ "is the propitiation for our sins," and His blood "cleanseth us from all sin," I John 2:2, 1:7, how can the merits of Mary and other saints possibly add to this? During the Middle Ages, Popes authorized the mass sale of indulgences throughout Europe, a practice of which Luther spoke out against. During World War II, the Archbishop of Winnipeg, in a letter dated March 1, 1944, urged Roman Catholic mothers to guarantee the salvation of their sons from Purgatory by the payment to him of \$40 for prayers and masses in their behalf.

No amount of money can pay for our sins or guarantee salvation. It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, Matthew 19:23-24; in the Catholic Church it is easy for the rich to have many masses said for them. The wealthy cannot redeem themselves, Psalm 49:6-7. We are "NOT redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," I Peter 1:18-19. When the former Samaritan sorcerer Simon offered money to obtain a gift of God, Peter said literally, "To hell with you and your money! How dare you think you could buy the gift of God?" Acts 8:20, J.B. Phillips translation.

Catholic teaching about Purgatory, a place for the dead to further pay for their sins before being allowed to enter Heaven, is non-Biblical, and was not the teachings of Christ or the Apostles. It was not commonly believed until about 600 when Pope Gregory created the third state for the purification of souls, and did not become actual dogma until the Council of Florence in 1459.

Once again, beliefs about a purgatory abound in pagan culture. Plato (427-347 B.C.) spoke of a place of torment to make amends for crimes of oneself or ones ancestors. Chinese Buddhists came to buy prayers for deliverance of their dead ones from purgatory, from special shops set up for that purpose. Zoroastrians teach of a place of purification. Moslems may escape purgatory by giving money to a religious leader. Israelites were warned not to give money "for the dead," Deuteronomy 26:14. Alexander Hislop concludes, "In every system, therefore, except that of the Bible, the doctrine of purgatory after death, and prayers for the dead, has always been found to occupy a place," Two Babylons, p. 167.

Molech worship was an example of various pagan systems which believed that fire was necessary to cleanse one from sin. Israelites were repeatedly forbidden to let their seed "pass through the fire to Molech," Leviticus 18:21; Jeremiah 32:35; II Kings 23:10. Molech (whom some identify with Bel or Nimrod), was worshipped with human sacrifices, purifications, mutilation, vows of celibacy and virginity, etc. Sometimes, Molech was represented as an idol with fire inside, so a baby placed in his arms was consumed. Lest the parents should relent, a noise of loud drums was sounded at the moment of fiery sacrifice to hide the screams. The word for drums is tophim, from which comes the word, "Tophet," Jeremiah 7:31.

Payments, mutilations, and all human efforts are insufficient and worthless in purging our sins. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8-9.

Pope: Vicar of Christ or Anti-Christ?

At the top of the Roman Catholic hierarchy is the Pope, said to be the successor of the Apostle Peter. The entire framework of Roman Catholicism is based on the claim that Peter was Rome's first bishop. Scriptures show an equality among members of the Church. Christ, not the Pope, "is the head of the Church,"

Ephesians 5:23. Religious hierarchies are not godly, and condemned by Christ, Mark 10:35-43. We are not to use the flattering title "father" (the word Pope means father), Rabbi, or Master, because we are all brethren, Matthew 23:4-10. The scripture says that Christ, not Peter, is the Rock upon which the Church is to be built, Matthew 16:18. Peter himself declared that Christ was the foundation rock, I Peter 2:4-8. The Church was built on Christ, Acts 4:11-12; I Corinthians 3:11.

Not until the time of Calixtus, who was Bishop of Rome from A.D. 218-223, was Matthew 16:18 used in an attempt to prove the Church was built upon Peter. Peter was not a Pope! He was married, Matthew 8:14; I Corinthians 9:5. Peter would not allow men to bow down to him, Acts 10:25-26. Peter did not place tradition on a level with the word of God, I Peter 1:18. On the day of Pentecost, Peter did not ask people to have a little water poured on them, but "Repent and be baptized [immersed] everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]," Acts 2:38. Peter was no Pope, for he wore no crown; he was looking forward to the crown of glory at the resurrection, I Peter 5:4. In short, Peter never acted like a Pope, never dressed like a Pope, never spoke like a Pope, never wrote like a Pope, and people did not approach him as a Pope.

As shown on Pentecost, Peter did take a prominent position of leadership in the early Church. His name is always listed first among the apostles, Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13. But, Paul was not behind the chiefest of the apostles, II Corinthians 12:11. Peter, James, and John were pillars in the Church, Galatians 2:9. Paul wrote 2,325 verses of the New Testament, while Peter wrote only 166 verses. Paul

stood up to Peter when he was to be blamed, Galatians 2:11. This would be strange were Peter an "infallible" Pope!

Paul was called "the Apostle of the Gentiles," Romans 11:13, whereas Peter's ministry was primarily to the Jews, Galatians 2:7-9. Rome was the chief Gentile city. It is likely that the Apostle Peter never went to Rome, even though tradition says he did (A.D. 42-67). In 44, Peter was in Jerusalem at the Council; about 53, Paul joined him in Antioch (Galatians 2:11). About A.D. 58, Paul wrote his letter to the Christians at Rome, greeting twenty-seven persons, but never mentions Peter. There was, however, a "peter" who did go to Rome. Details on this history is given in the article, "Simon Magus," by Ernest L. Martin.

Simon the sorcerer of Samaria was a leader in the mystery religion. The Catholic Encyclo-pedia admits that Justin Martyr and other early writers inform us that Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:5-25) afterwards went to Rome, worked miracles by the power of demons, received divine honors, and "no doubt founded some sort of religion as a counterfeit of Christianity which he claimed to play a part analogous to that of Christ," article "Impostors," p. 699.

In ancient Chaldea, the Supreme Pontiff of paganism bore the title "peter," (interpreter or opener of the mysteries). The Hebrew word "peter," is translated "openeth" in verses like Exodus 13:2. From Pergamos on the west coast of what is now Turkey, the headquarters of paganism shifted to Rome. In 63 B.C., Roman Emperor Julius Caesar was officially recognized as the "Pontifex Maximus." Subsequent Roman Emperors continued to be heads of the mystery religion until A.D. 378,

when Demasus, bishop of Rome, was elected Pontifex Maximus. Subsequent Popes have continued to hold this pagan title.

In Mithraism, one of the main branches of mystery religions which came to Rome, the sun-god carried two keys. Romans believed in Janus, who held keys. Keys are symbolic of the authority to open and close. "Pontiff" means "bridge-maker," one who can open and shut doors. In Matthew 16:19, Christ said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." The key given to Peter and all the other disciples was the message of the gospel, whereby people could enter the kingdom of God. In pagan religion, however, the keys represented religious rulership over the people, which is contrary to the Bible. The head priest of Mithraism was called the Pater Patrum, or Father of Fathers, exactly as the title of the Pope (papa).

Vestments of the Roman clergy are direct legacies from pagan Rome. Dagon, the fish-god (dag in Hebrew means fish), was popular among the heathen Philistines, Judges 16:21-30; I Sam-uel 5:5-6. Priests of Dagon had a fish mitre on their head, and a fan-like tail of a fish as part of their garments, just like the pope and Catholic leaders do today.

Processions of the Pope, being carried on a chair in full regalia with a giant feather fan, are copied from Egyptian priest-king processions.

It is no secret that many Popes in the Middle Ages were some of the most sexually vile, evil, wicked, murderous individuals of all time. Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) was singularly

wicked, who said "to enjoy oneself and to lie carnally with women or with boys is no more a sin than rubbing one's hands together." Yet, this was the Pope who in 1302 issued the well-known Unam Sanctum which officially declared that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church, outside of which no one can be saved, and says, "We, therefore, assert, define and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the Pontiff of Rome." Should a sinful Pope be obeyed? Here is the official Catholic affirmation: "A sinful pope . . . remains a member of the (visible) church and is to be treated as a sinful, unjust ruler for whom we must pray, but from whom we may not withdraw our obedience," Catholic Encyclopedia, article "Councils," p. 435. The Truth is, that salvation is not dependent upon a line of wicked men who claim to trace their authority back to Peter. Salvation is found in Christ alone!

Popes Infallible?

Although six Popes rejected the idea that Popes are infallible, in 1870, the Vatican Council nevertheless made papal infallibility a church dogma. This teaching says that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* (i.e., in his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians), and defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the entire church, that he is infallible, and consequently such decisions are irreformable.

However, Pope after Pope contradicted previous Popes. And, Popes have taken to themselves lofty titles, such as "Most Holy Lord," "Vicar of Christ," "the mouth of Jesus Christ," etc. On June 20, 1894, Pope Leo XIII said, "We hold upon the earth the place of God Almighty."

As early as 1612, Andreas Helwig pointed out in his book, Roman Antichrist, that the title "Vicar of Christ" in Latin, Vicarivs Filii Dei, has a numerical value of 666 (see Revelation 13:18). Numerous other names and titles add up to the same auspicious number. The original name of Rome was Saturnia, the secret name revealed only to initiates of the Chaldean mysteries, which in Chaldean was spelled STUR. In their language, S represented 60, T was 400, U was 6, and R was 200, for a total of 666. Nero Caesar in Hebrew comes to 666. The Greek letters of the word Lateinos (Latin) come to 666, as well as the Hebrew of Romulus, Romiith, the founder of Rome. The six letters which make up the Roman numeral system also add up to 666. D=500, C=100, L=50, X=10, V=5, I=1. In the Bible itself, we read that each year, King Solomon received 666 talents of gold, I Kings 10:14. Wealth played an important part in leading him astray. In the New Testament, the letters of the Greek word euporia, translated "wealth," in Acts 19:25, add up to 666, as does the word paradosis, translated "tradition" in Matthew 15:2. Wealth and tradition were the two great corruptors of the Roman Church, then and now. Wealth corrupted practice and honesty; tradition corrupted doctrine.

Inquisition, Then and Now

Numerous Popes promulgated "bulls," official documents, which encouraged torture and murder of those who opposed the Roman Catholic religious system. The methods of gruesome torture devised during the period of the Inquisition are a testimony to the corrupt influence of Satanically-inspired human beings apart from God. Ten thousand Huguenots (French Protestants) were killed in the bloody Paris massacre on "St. Bartholomew's Day," 1572. The French king went to mass to return solemn thanks that so many "heretics" were slain. The papal court rejoiced at the news, and Pope Gregory XIII in grand procession, went to the Church of St. Louis to offer thanks. Inquisition was ordered by papal decree and confirmed by Pope after Pope.

This does not detract from Hitler's Pope, Pius XII, who abetted the Nazi regime. Hitler would never have come to power had it not been for Catholic support. While Jews and others died in Nazi concentration camps, the Pope and others who knew what was going on were silent. And, after the war, the church was instrumental in helping Nazis to escape via the infamous "ratlines."

There appears to be nothing new, no change of heart, in the Roman system. Repentance, not political apologies, is the only avenue for those enmeshed in the Romish system of Babylon. The way to repent for papists is to renounce the Babylonish system, to come out of her.

"Lords Over God's Heritage"

The highest-ranking officials of the Roman Catholic Church, next to the Pope, are cardinals. You won't find cardinals mentioned in the Bible. The original cardinals were a group of leading priests in the ancient pagan religion of Rome, long before the Christian era. The word "cardinal" comes from the Latin *cardo*, meaning "hinge," those who were pivotal leaders. They were priests of Janus, the pagan god of doors and hinges. Even today, the word, "janitor," a keeper of doors, comes from Janus, known as "the opener and shutter." As we know, only Christ opens and shuts doors, Revelation 3:7-8. Hislop reports, "The college of Cardinals, with the Pope at its head, is just the counterpart of the pagan college of Pontiffs, with its Pontifex Maximus, or Sovereign Pontiff, which is known to have been framed on the model of the grand original Council of Pontiffs at Babylon," *Two Babylons*, p. 206. Cardinals wear red garments. It not surprising that images of Chaldeans had ver-million (bright red). From ancient times, red or scarlet has been associated with sin, Isaiah 1:18. Adultery is sometimes called the scarlet sin, and houses of prostitution are in the "red light district."

Bishops are mentioned in the Bible, but here again, Catholic tradition perverts the Truth. The word, "cathedral," comes from *cathedra*, meaning "throne." A cathedral, unlike other churches, is one in which the throne of a bishop is located. Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7 indicate that bishops, elders, pastors, overseers, are the same office. Each Church had

several elders who were also bishops. We are warned to avoid the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which comes from the word nikao, "to conquer," and laos, "laity," which refers to the notion of a priestly order over the people. Peter instructs Church leaders not to be "lords over God's heritage," I Peter 5:1-3. The word translated "heritage" is kleron, which means "clergy." All spirit-begotten children of God are His heritage, His "clergy." God has a ministry for all His people, not just a special priestly class. Elders (plural) are to be ordained in every city, Acts 14:19-23; James 5:14. We believers are a royal priesthood, Revelation 1:6; I Peter 2:9. We are not to give flattering titles to religious leaders, Job 32:21; Matthew 23:9-12. "Pope" is a variation of the title "father," Catholic priests are called "fathers." And so it was that in one of the leading branches of the mystery religion which came to Rome, Mithraism, the priests were called "fathers," and the head priest who always lived at Rome was called Pater Patrum, "father of fathers." Since Christ told us not to call religious leaders "father," and pagan priests of Rome used this title, did the Catholics get this practice from the Bible, or from paganism?

The Bible gives us an example of a pagan priest being called "father," Judges 17:10. Catholics use the title, "Monsignor," meaning "My Lord." One of the meanings of "arch" is master, and Catholics use titles such as archbishop, archpriest, and archdeacon. Not to be outdone, English clergy uses titles such as "The Reverend," "The Right Reverend," etc., while the Bible uses "reverend" only in reference to God Himself, Psalm 111:9.

Sexual excess goes hand in hand with celibacy. Strange as it sounds, it is said that Queen Semiramis invented clerical celibacy (Hislop, p. 219). When the worship of Cybele, the Babylonian goddess, was introduced into pagan Rome, it came

in its primitive form, with its celibate clergy. As in pagan times, temple celibates were actually involved in licentious sexual practices. "Forbidding to marry" led to sexual license. This has shown its ugly head many times during the history of the Roman Catholic Church, although doubtless, many priests have been faithful to their vows of celibacy.

Forbidding priests to marry (contrary to I Timothy 4:1-3), along with the practice of the confessional was bound to cause some weak individuals to sin. There is a tremendous power that a priest has over someone that is bound to divulge their sins to a priest, a practice held to be necessary for salvation. The Bible says we should confess our faults one to another, James 5:16, not to a priest. The idea of confessing to a priest came, not from the Bible, but from Babylon. Secret confession was required before complete initiation was granted into the Babylonian mysteries. Such priestly confession was practiced in Medo-Persia, Egypt, and Rome, long before the Christian Era.

Almost everywhere you look at the Romish system, you find pagan origins. Even the usual black color of clergy garments worn by priests and some Protestants, follows the custom of the priests of Baal, chemarims, who wore black garments, Zephaniah 1:4; II Kings 23:5. As Adam Clarke notes, they were called kemarim, from camar, which means dark, black. He says that Jews today call Christian missionaries kemarim, because of their black clothes and garments. Another practice of the Catholic priesthood is that of tonsure, the rite of shaving the top of the head in a round circle. Buddhist priests, the priests of Osiris of Egypt, priests of Bacchus, and Mithra priests, also practiced tonsure, the round tonsure imitating a solar disk. Such was forbidden of God's people, "They shall not make baldness upon their head," Leviticus 19:27.

Any similarity between the Catholic ministry and hierarchy, and true ministers of God, is purely accidental.

The Idolatrous Mass

The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "In the celebration of the Holy Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. It is called transubstantiation, for in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of bread and wine do not remain, but the entire substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the entire substance of wine is changed into his blood, the species or outward semblance of bread and wine alone remaining," article, "Consecration," p. 277.

Jesus, in His last Passover meal with the disciples, said of the bread, "Take eat; this is my body," and of the cup, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood," Matthew 26:26-28. Was this meant to be taken literally or symbolically? The Bible answers clearly. When some of David's men risked their lives to bring him water from Bethlehem, he refused it, saying, "Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" II Samuel 23:17. The Bible speaks of Jesus as a "door," "vine," and "rock," John 10:9, 15:5; I Corinthians 10:4, and we recognize these statements as figurative and symbolic.

If the wine of the communion table became actual blood, to drink it would be forbidden by the Bible, Deuteronomy 12:16; Acts 15:20. Many Christian martyrs have lost their lives rather than partake of the idolatrous mass, in which the priest claims to literally have the power to create God. The Council of Trent proclaimed that belief in transubstantiation was essential to salvation. In offering up the mass, the priest believes he is actually sacrificing Christ, a renewal of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Bible, however, says Christ gave His life by one sacrifice for ever, Hebrews 10:10-14, 9:25-28.

After the priest blesses the bread (thinks he changes it into Christ), he places a wafer in the center of a sunburst stand called the monstrance. Catholics bow and worship this wafer god. Likewise, in Egypt, a cake was consecrated by a priest and was supposed to become the flesh of Osiris. Similar rites occurred in Mithraism and in ancient Mexico. Heathen priests ate a portion of all sacrifices. In cases of human sacrifice, priests of Baal were required to eat human flesh. Thus we have the word, "cannibal," which comes from "Cahan-Bal," priest of Baal.

The wafer of Eucharist is round. Jesus, at His last Passover, merely broke the unleavened bread, which does not break into round pieces. Round wafers are another symbol of Baal, or the sun. Round cakes were used in the ancient mysteries of Egypt, Mithraism, and elsewhere. Sun images adorn the top of the famous baldachinum, the 95-foot high canopy inside the Vatican. Israelite reformers broke down the altars of Baal and the sun images (margin), II Chronicles 34:4. The round Eucharist wafers often have a cross on them, exactly as Assyrian wafers used in worship. Passover is observed at night,

but Catholics usually observe Mass in the early morning, similar to Mithraists who observed their sacred meetings in the early morning in honor of the sun. Contrast the elaborate ritual of the idolatrous Catholic Mass to the simple Christian Passover!

Three Days and Three Nights

In Chapter 18, Woodrow provides clear proof for a Wednesday crucifixion, Sabbath resurrection, with Jesus in the tomb exactly three days and three nights, 72 hours, as He said in Matthew 12:40.

The strongest proof of this fact is Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56. In Mark 16:1-2, we read, "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him, and very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." The Interlinear Bible shows that "bought" rather than "had bought" is the proper translation. Note that it is "bought," not "brought." It was after the Sabbath when these women bought their spices. Then, Luke 23:56 reports that after seeing Jesus' body in the sepulchre, the women "returned, and prepared spices and ointments: and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." There were two Sabbaths in question

here: the annual Sabbath (first day of Unleavened Bread, see John 19:14, 31), and the weekly Sabbath.

Jesus kept the fourteenth Passover on Tuesday evening. He was crucified and buried on Wednesday, Passover day. Thursday was the high day annual Sabbath. The women bought burial spices on Friday, prepared them, and then rested on the weekly Sabbath. On the first day of the week they came to anoint Jesus' body but found the tomb empty because He was risen. Surely, the commonly accepted Good Friday, Easter Sunday resurrection is a false tradition of men!

Fish on Friday, Easter Customs

The Catholic practice of abstaining from red meat on Friday, and instead eating fish on Friday, is derived from their false teaching of a Friday crucifixion. Scriptures never associate fish with Friday. The word "Friday" comes from "Freya," the teutonic fertility goddess symbolized by fish, who lay prolific amounts of eggs. Freya is the same as the Roman Venus, goddess of fertility, for whom the fish was regarded as sacred. Likewise, in the Israelite worship of Ashtoreth and Egyptian worship of Isis, the fish symbolized the fertility goddess.

In Acts 12:4, "Easter" is a mistranslation. The Greek word is pascha, which means Passover. There is no association between the Biblical Passover and the pagan Easter spring

festival. Easter comes from Astarte or Ishtar. Easter customs, such as colored eggs, come from Babylon. The Babylonians believed a huge egg fell from heaven into the Euphrates River, from which Astarte (Easter) was hatched. Colored Easter eggs symbolize the fertility goddess Easter.

The Catholic Encyclopedia admits that "Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table of Easter Day, colored red to symbolize the Easter joy. . . . The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter." The Encyclopaedia Britannica notes, "The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility."

Sunrise worship has long been associated with paganism. From Japanese Shintoists to pagan Mithrists of Rome, meeting together to worship facing the rising sun has long been practiced. Priests of Baal first began their worship in the morning, I Kings 18:26. The Bible condemns pagan sun worship, Ezekiel 8:16. Jesus was not resurrected at sunrise on Sunday morning, but just before sunset on Saturday afternoon. Once again, pagan customs have been freely incorporated into Catholic worship practice.

Legend has it that Tammuz was killed by a wild boar when he was forty years old. Forty days were set aside to weep for Tammuz, with fasting, weeping, and self-chastisement. See Ezekiel 8:14. This observance was known not only in Babylon, but also among the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Mexicans, and for a time, even among the Israelites. The Catholic Encyclopedia admits there are no apostolic observances of Lent, which was

not commanded by the Pope until the sixth century, when Catholics were ordered not to eat meat for forty days of Lent.

Christmas

The word "Chrstmas" is a contradictory word. It links "Christ," the Son of God, with "mass," the idolatrous and blasphemous Roman Catholic ritual. Jesus could not have been born on December 25. Shepherds in Judaea brought their flocks in for the winter before the end of October. The Catholic Encyclopedia admits, "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts." It was not until late in the fourth century when the Roman Church began observing December 25th. Coincident-ally(?), the date chosen for the birth of Christ was on the same date as the birth of Sol, the pagan sun-god from Mithraism. The winter solstice festival of Rome, the Saturnalia, influenced many Christmas customs, including the giving of gifts. Note that the wise men presented gifts to Jesus, not to themselves, and they came not when He was lying in a manger, but when He was in a house, Matthew 2:9-11.

The Christmas tree has its roots in pagan tree worship. An old Babylonian fable told of an evergreen tree which sprang out of a dead tree stump. The old stump symbolized the dead Nimrod, and the new evergreen tree symbolized that Nimrod had come back to life again in Tammuz. In Rome, the sacred fir was decorated with red berries during the Saturnalia. In at

least ten Biblical references, including I Kings 14:23, the green tree is associated with idolatry and false worship. Jeremiah 10:3-4 seems to be referring to a type of Christmas tree used in pagan worship. Although probably well-intentioned, many who observe Christmas customs today ignore the clear facts that most of these customs have pagan origins, and we are told not to follow the ways of the heathen, Deuteronomy 12:29-32.

Pagan Festivals, or God's Holy Days?

The pagan origin of Easter, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Halloween, and a host of other Catholic holidays is so well-known that we should need little review. Any encyclopedia, or newspaper during these seasons, usually gives well-documented facts. These holidays were borrowed directly from paganism, with a little brushing off to make them appear "Christian."

And so it is that God's Holy Days are often neglected, while worldly holidays of pagan origin appear to be more appealing to carnal humanity. And today in the Church of God, there is a curious longing to return to what we came out of. The mixture of paganism and some Bible Truth is a deadly poison. This is the cup which the Babylonish system has made all the world to drink. It is not limited to the Roman Catholic Church of Rome,

but she certainly plays a major role in today's religious deception.

A Poisonous Mixture

The Romish system is based upon a mixture. That was the same as the apostasy into which the Israelites repeatedly fell. Usually Israel did not reject outright the worship of the true God, but mixed heathen rites with it. When they worshipped the golden calf, the Israelites claimed it was a "feast to the Lord," Exodus 32:5. Not content with the tabernacle of God, they added the tabernacle of Moloch and Chiun, with pagan images, Amos 5:26; Acts 7:42-43. At another period, Israel performed secret rites, built high places and groves, used divination, caused their children to pass through the fire, and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, II Kings 17:9-17. As a result, God allowed them to be expelled from their land. Mixture was apparent during the time of both judges and kings. At the time of Ezekiel, an idol was placed right at the entrance of the Jerusalem temple. Some even sacrificed their children, and came that very day to the sanctuary, Ezekiel 23:38-39. Jeremiah's message was aimed at people who claimed to "worship the Lord," Jeremiah 7:2, but had mixed in pagan rites. "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Ye . . . burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods . . . make cakes to the queen of heaven . . . and come and stand before me in this house," Jeremiah 7:8-18.

The Eternal does not accept religious mixtures. If Baal be god, then serve him, but if Yahweh is God, then serve Him, I Kings 18:21. God was not pleased with a religious mixture then, nor is He now. As Samuel preached, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth [pagan mother goddess worship] from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you," I Samuel 7:3.

Today, many believe that the Roman System has changed. With Vatican II, non-Catholic, professing Christians are not considered heretics, but "separated brethren." Don't kid yourselves. Satan appears as an angel of light, II Corinthians 11:14. Jesus warned about "wolves in sheep's clothing," Matthew 7:15. The same Babylon mystery system has always oppressed free men who seek to serve God in sincerity and Truth. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge that is available to them (see Hosea 4:6). Come out of her, My people, Revelation, 18:4. Let us earnestly contend for the true faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3.

Ralph Woodrow concludes his excellent book, Mystery Babylon Religion, with this stirring summary: "We believe the true Christian goal is not religion based on mixture, but a return to the original, simple, powerful, and spiritual faith that was once delivered to the saints. No longer entangling ourselves in a maze of rituals or powerless traditions, we can find the 'sim-licity that is in Christ', rejoicing in the 'liberty wherewith Christ has made us free' from 'bond-age'." (II Corinthians 11:3; Galatians 5:1).

“Salvation is not dependent on a human priest, Mary, the saints, or the pope. Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’ (John 14:6). ‘Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12). Let us look to JESUS who is the author and finisher of our faith, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, the Lamb of God, the Captain of our Salvation, the Bread from Heaven, the Water of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Prince of Peace, the King of kings and Lord of lords!” (Woodrow, p. 161).

May the Almighty guide us all to come totally out of Babylon!